

Just a Second

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Summary: An Armitage III fic: the Battle of Dunwich Hill as seen through the eyes of a second-generation Martian robot. But though she cannot help Ross and Armitage directly, she is not powerless.

Just a Second

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>an Armitage III fanfiction by Ukyou Kuonji<br>  
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>Armitage the Third is the creation of Taro Maki. <br>North American rights held by Pioneer.  
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>I knew I should be glad for my homeland upon the announcement of the  
<br>unification, but patriotism was not an emotion that had been given to  
>me. Concern, however, was.<br>  
>And I was concerned. Worried, even. What dangers would this pose to  
<br>me and my kind?  
><br>Not the unification; it was the battle taking place far from St. Lowell  
>that worried me. It was a battle that had to take place, so the reports  
<br>went, before the treaty could be ratified between Earth and Mars. There  
>was a rebel military installation many miles away in Dunwich Hill that  
<br>had to be eradicated.  
><br>Of course, the ceremony in St. Lowell's main plaza was taking place even  
>as the battle raged on the public viewscreens. In the daycare center  
<br>that was both my workplace and my home, the viewscreens in opposite  
>corners of the room displayed the two events simultaneously, one on  
<br>each screen. As strange as it might seem, the governor of Mars shook  
>hands with the Terran president as if nothing were amiss, as if the  
<br>outcome of the battle were a foregone conclusion. But why would

it not?

>Hundreds of troops, in tanks and planes and battle armour, representing <br>all of Mars, against two lonely people. How could they lose?

><br>All of Mars pitted against two individuals, in a battle to determine the

>fate of robots on this planet. Yes, robots. There was no military <br>installation on Dunwich Hill; only the R&D headquarters of Conception

>Robotics. <br>

>I should know. I was born there.<br>

>You see, I am a Second. I am one of the causes of the social unrest that <br>has gripped Mars, so I have heard. I have been told that I my existence

>takes a job away from some deserving human, and because of that, I should <br>be scrapped, destroyed, to make room for that human, whoever he or she may

>be. Some of my fellow Seconds have actually been forcibly dismantled <br>during the riots lately in St. Lowell. But it never changes things here.

>All of us watching the workers' children are still Seconds; no human ever <br>seems to want to apply. They're too busy with their executive careers or

>what have you to take so menial a job as daycare worker. <br>

>So why are we so hated? I sit watching as all the military might of Mars <br>pursues and punishes these two, whose only crime seems to be that they

>support the rights of robots. It's rumoured that one of them is even one <br>of the next-generation Thirds that survived the recent vigilante murder

>spree of Rene Danclaude. Regardless, this girl and this man have no hope <br>of winning against all this firepower. They haven't even a hope of survival.

><br>It is obvious that this massive attack is meant to crush these two utterly.

>They will be martyrs to the cause of robots' rights, but what good is that? <br>No human will weep for their destruction, and the government will surely

>erase all records of their existence. Their memory will do nothing if <br>there is no memory. All that they may have been trying to accomplish,

>all they wanted to say or do, will be lost in the sands of the Martian desert.<br>

>I stand transfixed, staring at the screen, until I feel a tug at my skirt. <br>I look down at the face of a little girl. For a brief second, my processors

>reflect on the irony that Keiko here looks eerily like this Naomi Armitage; <br>the same short tan hair, the same piercing gaze. I crouch to her level,

>staring into those eyes, the eyes like those of an enemy of the state. <br>"What is it, Keiko?"

><br>"Whatcha watchin', Auntie Mariso?"

><br>For whatever reason, I hear strains of a century-old musical playing in my head.

>The characters in it were fighting a war then, too. Even with my deliberately <br>limited intelligence, it occurs to me at that moment that if prejudice must be

>carefully taught, perhaps it is my opportunity, my duty, to carefully teach <br>tolerance to Keiko and her little friends. I make a quick internal note to

> speak with my co-workers about this: so long as humans need us to  
watch their <br> sons and daughters, the names and sacrifice of Ross  
Syllabus and Naomi Armitage  
> need not be forgotten. Humans and robots will coexist peacefully  
someday, and <br> it begins by teaching the children.  
> <br> I sit down on the floor, and pick the child up. Setting her on  
my lap, I begin:  
> "Well, Keiko, it's like this..." <br>  
> \*\*\*\*\* <br>  
> ::sheepish grin:: <br>  
> It's amazing what you can accomplish when you aren't planning on it.  
I had <br> taken my laptop with me when we travelled to the Clan  
Kenzan ancestral seat  
> for the holidays. I had merely brought it along to read old fanfics  
en route <br> (it's a bit of a drive, you understand) -- was looking  
for a fic entitled  
> "Oh My Ranma." I didn't find it, but I found this story running  
around in <br> my head, and I scribbled down the initial outline in  
about five or ten minutes.  
> <br> In the last ten minutes of 'Polymatrix', there is a grand  
montage of the battle,  
> the Terran motorcade, and various Martian man-in-the-street shots,  
including <br> several scenes of some various anxious Seconds watching  
battle footage from  
> their various jobs as waitress, showgirl, secretaryreceptionist...  
and daycare  
> worker. It made me curious as to what went on in their minds as they  
watched. <br>  
> The daycare worker especially intrigued me; here was a despised,  
second-class <br> citizen entrusted for whatever reason with the  
hearts and minds of the next  
> generation. I may have given her more intelligence and a more  
politically <br> radical personality than might be safe for a Second  
to have, but these creatures  
> could not be dummies in order to be given employment as teachers,  
after all. <br> With so much sentience must come self-awareness...  
certainly the anxious looks  
> the Seconds were giving to the telescreens betrayed that. <br>  
> My sister worked in daycare for several years, and it's a thankless  
and <br> low-paying job. I can see \*why\* the Martians let Seconds do  
this work.  
> On the other hand, these are the minds that may one day run the  
world, so <br> it's an important job, too. For good or for ill, there  
is a great deal of  
> influence a teacher can have, even at that tender age. So I decided  
to <br> approach the final apocalypse of Dunwich Hill from that  
perspective.  
> <br> Enough soapboxing. My greetings go out to all for the coming new  
year...  
> may it be one of hope and peace to each and every one of you. <br>  
  
> Itsu mo, <br> Ucchan ^\_^  
> <p><p>

End  
file.